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PURPLE ROTC—WHAT A CONCEPT!

by

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Preface

If the United States is to remain a dominant force into the 21st century, our military forces must fight as a “Joint” team. Currently military officers don’t receive any “Joint” training until later in their careers. This is not an ideal situation. The earlier an officer can understand the nuances of each Service the better the entire military will be as a whole. An Armed Forces ROTC program is the first step. A curriculum that is “purple” in design will give all prospective ROTC officers a taste of each Service’s capabilities. This will not only help officers understand sister Services’ roles and missions, but help the individual Services by increasing the number of ROTC detachments they can draw recruits from.

Many thanks to Lt Col Sharon Branch for her guidance and continuous support. I would also like to thank Ms. Bonny Johns (USN), Maj Eric Battino (USA) and Dr. Charles Nath III (USAF) for supplying the current ROTC curriculums for their respective Services.

Abstract

Our Armed Forces have united to fight Jointly many times in past and present conflicts. The next millennium will be no different, in fact to retain full spectrum dominance our nation's military will have to work more as a Joint team than ever before.

Currently military officers do not experience the Joint environment until mid-level in their careers. This is no longer acceptable for success. Future military leaders need to learn sister Service uniques and experience Jointness at the beginning of their careers in order to ensure that the operation is more than Joint in name only.

Each of the Services' curriculums was reviewed for commonalties. Many "purple" commonalties such as Drill & Ceremony, The Uniform Code of Military Justice, and leadership already exist. A benefit that was realized early in this study was that each Service would have expanded recruiting pools by being represented at all ROTC detachments. This is achieved by staffing each detachment with a Joint team of ROTC instructors.

Our military force has experienced a massive reduction and realignment since the end of the Cold War. Equipment modernization and increased training are all being emphasized in today's military. The smaller we get as a total force, and the more the threat of terrorism and Military Operations Other Than War increases the more we will need to rely on our sister Services' strengths. An Armed Forces ROTC program is an important start for the US military of the 21st century.

Chapter 1

Introduction

The United States Armed Forces are operating at a high level of Ops Tempo and doing more Joint operations. Funding is scarce and they are tasked to find ways to do things more efficiently and better. Training has always been the cornerstone to any successful military operation. By redesigning the ROTC training program into a Joint or Armed Forces ROTC program we would commission officers who are ready for Joint operations from the outset of their military careers.

In the 21st century we will need strong military leaders who understand the dynamic nature of working jointly. Without sacrificing their basic Service competencies, these future leaders must be schooled in joint operations from the beginning of their careers.¹ The dilemma facing the military is officers are not trained about the complexities and similarities of working in this Joint environment until much later in their careers. This is a mistake! Joint Vision 2010 illuminates the path of future operations and outlines the importance of future education and training programs tailored to bring our armed forces into the 21st century. It's not a road paved in blue, green, brown, or white—but purple. As General Shalikashvili said, “The nature of modern warfare demands that we fight as a Joint team.”²

In order to achieve the future goals set by Joint Vision 2010 we must provide a common direction for the Services in the arena of education. Joint doctrine is a critical ingredient for future success, because the way in which leaders think and organize their forces will be as important as the technology we use to conduct future operations.³ Currently, military officers first “taste” Joint life after they are experts in their Service specialties. This is important in order for the officer to understand what their respective Service brings to the fight. A better plan would be to have the officer at least Joint “lingual” as early in his career as possible—ROTC is the perfect starting location. By cadets learning Joint vernacular from the beginning they will not only be ready for future Joint assignments, but also more importantly, stronger assets in our ever shrinking force structure. Another positive multiplier to this early Joint indoctrination is the overall understanding each ROTC officer will have of each Service’s strong points and limitations.⁴

Why is this so important? Why does this warrant discussion? What’s the worst that can happen if things stay status quo? This paper will discuss a personal experience from the author detailing the pitfalls of attempting to do something Joint when nobody understands “Jointness.” Next, the paper will review the Desert One operation (Iranian hostage rescue attempt), highlighting the importance of Joint being more than just a word in the title of an operation. Another good historical reference is Urgent Fury (Grenada), where improvements in how the Services operated together were still needed. Lastly, a review of Desert Shield/Storm, herald as a shining example of a Joint operation that went well, will be discussed.

A new “Purple” ROTC won’t make all our Joint problems go away, but it can provide a strong foundation to build on. A Joint ROTC program will provide the Services additional recruiting locations and reduced fiscal overhead from redundancies currently in the system. Most universities that want a ROTC detachment must choose between each Service. Very few universities have all the Services represented for the student body to evaluate and choose from. This paper identifies a way to maximize our current ROTC detachments by having all cadets learn about the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines. They would have an open mind upon entering the cadet corps and after two years be able to select which Service they wanted to join. Of course mission requirements would take priority. At universities with more than one detachment already in place, you would see reduced staffs and reduced overhead by having one Joint Armed Forces detachment.

Almost no one questions whether Joint operations are desirable, most agree they should stay and they in fact increase our efficiency and use of military power. Even with the positive strides we have made to understand the Joint environment we still have a long way to go. To complete the transition from Joint operations being an after thought, the Services will need to make an innovative organizational change on how they commission new ROTC officers. The future is “Purple” and we need to begin “Purple,” rather than waste time later with remedial “Purple” training.

Notes

¹ Joint Chiefs of Staff (DoD) Joint Vision 2010: America’s Military; Preparing for Tomorrow. Air Command and Staff College. 1996, 29.

² Ibid, 1996, preface cover.

³ Ibid, 29.

⁴ Joint Force Quarterly. Emergence of the Joint Officer, Autumn 1996, 56.

Chapter 2

Current ROTC Curriculum

The overriding question at this point should be “How similar are the Services’ ROTC programs today?” This is a key question, because the more similar the curriculums the easier it will be to “merge” them.

Army Curriculum

Army ROTC is offered as both a 2-year and 4-year program. The 4-year program starts with Introduction to the US Army, History of Modern Warfare, Land Navigation and Military Skills, Leadership and Management, as well as Organizational Management, and Law. These blocks are all lectures and conducted in seminar by the ROTC staff. Cadets go to Advanced Camp after their junior year. The Cadets also take leadership laboratory and beginner weight training and conditioning each semester.

The 2-year Army ROTC program begins with the cadets attending ROTC Camp Challenge prior to their junior year. They then complete the same junior and senior year curriculums as the 4-year cadets. The US Army, a History of Modern Warfare, Land Navigation and Military Skills blocks of instruction are condensed and covered during the ROTC Camp Challenge. These cadets attend the Advanced Camp as well upon completion of their junior year of college. They also complete leadership laboratory and beginner weight training and conditioning each semester.¹

Air Force Curriculum

Air Force ROTC is offered as both a 2-year and 4-year program. The 4-year program begins with an Introduction to the US Air Force, a History of Air Power, and Written Communication Skills. Next the cadets learn about Development of Modern Employment of Air Power, Introduction to Leadership, Ethics, and Values, Group Leadership Problems & Presentation Techniques. Finally in junior and senior year they finish with Communication & Leadership, Air Force Management, National Security Policy, Military Law & Service Orientation, and lastly AF Roles and Active Duty. These blocks are all lectures and conducted in seminar by the ROTC staff. Cadets go to a four-week Field Training Encampment after their sophomore year

The 2-year Air Force ROTC program begins with cadets attending a six week Field Training Encampment prior to their junior year. They then complete the same junior and senior year curriculums as the 4-year cadets. Missing are the Introduction to the US Air Force, History of Air Power, and Written Communication Skills, Development of Modern Employment of Air Power, Introduction to Leadership, Ethics, and Values, Group Leadership Problems & Presentation Techniques. These are covered during the additional two weeks of Field Training Encampment Challenge.

All cadets may attend the Advanced Training Program, which operates as an intern program, assigning cadets to an active duty AF base for two to three weeks of orientation. This training is conducted after junior year. All Cadets also take a Leadership Laboratory each semester.²

Naval Curriculum

Navy and Marine ROTC is also offered as both a 2-year and 4-year program. The 4-year program begins with Naval Traditions, Sea Power, Naval Engineering & Weapons, Evolution of Warfare, Navigation, Leadership & Management, and Amphibious Warfare. These blocks are all lectures and conducted in seminar by the ROTC staff. Each summer midshipmen go aboard ship for a “cruise” to gain insight into life at sea. This program is approximately 4 weeks long each summer. The midshipmen who have Marine-opted spend the summer after their junior year at a six-week Marine Officer Candidate School.

The 2-year Navy ROTC program begins with the applicants attending a six-and-a-half week Naval Science Institute. This training encompasses what the midshipmen would have learned during the first two years of NROTC. They then complete the same junior and senior year curriculums as the 4-year midshipmen. All midshipmen participate in Leadership Laboratories each semester.³

The unique and interesting thing about the Navy and Marine ROTC program is that it is already a combined ROTC program of sorts. In the 4-year program all midshipmen begin with strictly Naval training. The midshipmen interested in becoming Marines take a separate, yet similar, course load for their sophomore and junior years. The midshipmen are then linked together again for their senior year of training.

Current Curriculum Similarities

From the outset it is evident that many similarities exist between the Services’ ROTC curriculums. To begin with, each has a period of Leadership Laboratories, which emphasize the fundamentals of drill, physical training, professional ceremonies, reaction/confidence course, and even guest speakers. Next, they give an introduction to

their Service as well as an overall history. Other similarities include leadership, management skills, and military law. Lastly, each Service has a summer training program of some sort between sophomore and junior year and an advanced intern type program after junior year.

Officership is prevalent in every subject taught. Students are graded not only on knowledge, but on military bearing and appearance as well. These scores are an early form of “performance feedback” and are not unique to any Service. In fact the Services would gain by the ROTC cadets taking notice of how sharp their sister Services are early in their careers. This would be accomplished under my proposal for Joint ROTC training with the staff fielded from all the Services.

In very broad terms there are some things in the respective curriculums that are Service unique. But these are the exception not the rule, and in fact, may be easily combined with other similar sister Service topics. Examples include the Navy block on Celestial and Electronic Navigation, which could in actuality be similar to the Army block on Land Navigation. The AF has numerous courses designed to teach communication skills, which could be similar to the Army’s Leadership and Organization courses. Interestingly, the Army goes to great length to detail a weight training and conditioning program. The Navy (and Marines) discusses physical fitness as well.

The last area, which is vital to each ROTC program, is the summer training programs. As stated earlier, the Army sends 2-year cadets to a six week Camp Challenge course. After junior year all cadets attend the Advanced Camp (Camp All-American). This is the most important training event in the Army ROTC program. The entire third year is spent preparing cadets for this experience.⁴

The AF has a very similar design. All 2-year cadets attend a six-week Field Training Camp prior to entering junior year. After junior year cadets may attend the advanced training program. This intern type program places cadets at AF bases to acquaint them with life, duties, and responsibilities of AF people.⁵

The Navy differs from the other two Services, in that they have midshipmen attend a summer camp every year. They call this “Summer Cruises.” The summer after freshman year midshipmen receive hands on experience on ships, submarines, and aircraft. They also participate in an amphibious landing and a helicopter urban assault with the Marines. After sophomore year the midshipmen go aboard ship or submarines as an enlisted person to experience life aboard ship. After junior year the midshipmen again go aboard ship, this time experiencing the life of a junior officer. Foreign exchange cruises are also offered to midshipmen, giving them the opportunity to cruise aboard foreign naval vessels. The midshipmen who have identified a desire to go into the Marines spend the summer after their junior year at Marine Officer Candidate School.⁶

After successfully completing the ROTC programs, cadets/midshipmen from each of the Services will receive the commissioned rank of an O-1 (2Lt or Ensign). All Marine 2Lt’s must attend a six month leadership and infantry training course at the Basic School, where they are assigned an occupational specialty.

This author believes it would not be a huge undertaking to merge ROTC programs into a Joint format. The Navy already has a merged program with the Marines that works. Leadership, Drill & Ceremony, and the UCMJ are not Service specific and are just a few areas everyone could do universally under a “purple” umbrella.

Notes

- ¹ <http://www.uri.edu/atrs/mcs/programs.html>. [Internet]
- ² http://www.af.mil/news/factsheets/Air_Force_Reserve_Officer_Tra.html.
- ³ <http://www.duke.edu/nrotc/wardroom/recruit/overview.htm>. [Internet]
- ⁴ <http://www.uri.edu/atrs/mcs/programs.html>. [Internet]
- ⁵ http://www.af.mil/news/factsheets/Air_Force_Reserve_Officer_Tra.html.
- ⁶ <http://www.duke.edu/nrotc/wardroom/recruit/overview.htm>.

Chapter 3

A Time For Change

What transpires on prospective battlefields is influenced vitally years before in the councils of the staff and in the legislative halls of Congress. Time is the only thing that may be irrevocably lost, and it is the first thing lost sight of in the seductive false security of peaceful times...

—General Malin Craig, Chief of Staff, Army, 1939

The future of military operations is clearly a Joint venture. This is not the first such study suggesting improvement to ROTC training. As early as 1959 Lyons and Masland presented a study that suggested numerous revisions.¹ They determined that, “the nature of the officers requirements of the armed services is changing.” Both saw the “impact of weapons development and the complexities of our international commitments” necessitated a change in how we were doing business.

Maj Walter Them (USAF) in his ACSC paper dated Jun 1967, determined a gap existed between the Services’ ROTC programs.² He noted that not only did the fellow ACSC students he talked with have no idea about each other’s ROTC curriculums, but that the AU library did not contain the sister Service regulations. Further, HQ AFROTC had no idea what the Army or Navy was teaching in their ROTC programs. He concluded “more time should be allotted to a study of the other Services by ROTC students in order to increase appreciation and understanding of their roles, historically and in current day combined operations.”³

In the two prior studies discussed, the authors suggested that ROTC could be done in a better fashion. But none of these authors envisioned a Joint ROTC curriculum. This is partly due to the relatively recent appearance of “purple” operations, first for budgetary concerns, then later because it just made good sense.⁴ Consider the benefits that would be gained from having a part of America’s officer corps Joint lingual? They would know the importance of having good close air support for Army operations, and be able to comprehend the necessity of deep strikes by the AF against enemy centers of gravity. It would also make sense that these new military leaders would understand that the Marines are a great world wide “police” force, but that they lack the ability to hold land without support from the Navy and Army.

Why is all this important? Who is going to be carrying this fight to the enemy? These new leaders! Who is going to be making the acquisition decisions that will affect all the soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen? They are! And how can they be expected to do this efficiently if we don’t give them a good understanding of each of the Services early on? Could the F-22 have been the new Joint Strike Fighter if the acquisition folks had known about Navy requirements during the design phase? How much time, effort, and resources could have been saved? The more our military force shrinks, the more we will be tasked to conduct Joint operations – it is a necessity for the operation to survive.

Parts is Parts

If we begin with the very simple areas, which is the same way you eat an elephant...one bite at a time, then it would make sense to start with Drill & Ceremonies. Proper uniform wear is vital to discipline in every Service, and while some Services have unique ceremonies, retreat is retreat and reveille is reveille. Similarly, marching in

formation is the same regardless of the Service.⁵ Next, a uniform physical fitness program could be developed for all military cadets—why is it different today anyway? How hard can this be—all it takes is for the Services to agree on basic physical fitness requirements.

Another area that is very similar between the Services is military history and the study of leadership. If we are honestly looking for a better mousetrap we will agree there is no reason for the ROTC to be taught differently in these areas. Sure each Service has a unique and highly decorated history—but wouldn't it benefit all future military leaders to learn about their sister Services? And leadership is as uniform as mathematics. Be it corporate, religious, or military, leadership is a fundamental principle.

The last area that seems transparent between the Services' ROTC curriculums is the study of the UCMJ. How much more alike can a subject be—the name itself supports “uniformity.” Why isn't this block currently developed by a team at the Pentagon and taught uniformly to all the ROTC detachments? Why are future military officers currently learning about this vital subject with Service “spins?” If nothing else maybe some of these areas will be created and conducted uniformly throughout the ROTC detachments.

Clearly there are many areas within the Services that are not uniform. That is why we don't have one Joint Armed Force, but several sister Services that work together as required. Not every person in ROTC has the ability to become a pilot. It has nothing to do with brainpower, physical abilities are a big eliminator from UPT. Some people are just too tall to fit in a submarine as well.

Another constraint that keep us from creating a school of “superior uniform people” is a fundamental belief in this nation on individualism. We have the right to be different. Perhaps a young American wishes to be an armor officer rather than a space analyst, our belief is that’s their choice. Any change to the current ROTC program must provide plenty of options for future students. If not these future military leaders will vote with their feet and not join up.

Same Beat, Different Drummer

Change is something most of us don’t seem to like. Numerous authors have written about this. One author reviewed talks about why it is important to plan for an uncertain future. In Schwartzs’ book “The Art of the Long View,” he illustrates a system of scenario exercises (‘what-if drills’ in AF financial circles) that help leaders learn to prepare for change.⁶ He goes on to say that the end result of good decisions is not an accurate picture of tomorrow, but better decisions about the future.⁷ It is time to heed this advice and see that tomorrow brings Jointness to the military, and that the sooner we start officers out Joint the better!

Each of the Services is steeped in tradition. Each celebrates its “birthday” (though most not as flamboyantly as the Marine Corps). Each will lean on their historical heritage, as well as mission uniqueness, to avoid change. But perhaps this strong tradition is all the more reason to train Jointly. When decision-makers begin to look to the future, denial acts as an automatic shut off valve.⁸ But if the Services can see their heritage as being limited when only a portion of the officer corps understands it, perhaps their leaders would see that it is important for all ROTC students to understand the richness of the history! If all officers understand the basic beginnings and heritage of the

Services, maybe they would make better decisions on how to employ them in a Joint operation.

The same can be said for the other crutch the Services lean on to avoid change—“we are unique—with unique missions” or tactics. This is true to some extent, but as discussed earlier, there already exists a lot of common ground in the established ROTC curriculums. If Jointness is truly a reality based on the Joint Chiefs proclamation of Joint Vision 2010, then the Services will need to highlight their uniqueness and tactical differences they bring to the fight to ensure success of the mission. If the officers responsible for creating the Joint operational plans understand these basic differences early on, we all will benefit.

Notes

¹ Education and Military Leadership: A Study of the ROTC, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1959), preface cover.

² Maj Walter J. Them, “A Curricular Comparison of the Army, Navy, Air Force ROTC Program.” Air Command and Staff College, (1967): 41.

³ Ibid, 51.

⁴ Joint Chiefs of Staff (DoD) Joint Vision 2010: America’s Military; Preparing for Tomorrow. Air Command and Staff College. 1996, 32.

⁵ Them, A Curricular Comparison, 51.

⁶ The Art of the Long View, (New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, 1991), 101.

⁷ Ibid, 106

⁸ Ibid, 36

Chapter 4

Joint Operations—What Worked, What Didn't

Joint forces must be designed from the ground up as a total package to meet the diverse and robust requirements of the future. This demands a complete integration of Joint doctrine, training, deployment, and equipment.

—General Denis J. Reimer, Chief of Staff, Army, 1998

History continues to show the importance of the Services better executing Joint Operations. A change is needed early in how the officers are trained. Aside from the documented historical cases that will be reviewed momentarily (Desert One, Grenada, and Desert Shield/Storm), the author will first discuss a non-wartime related Joint venture he was personally involved with and why it failed.

Personal Experience

The author was an Instructor Supervisor at Sheppard AFB and tasked to work with a Joint team of civilian and military personnel from each Service and DOD. Our charter was to create a Joint Comptroller Training Course for enlisted, civilian, and officer personnel to attend. These new courses would replace the current courses already offered by each Service. A novel idea that sounded good on the surface, but as we began to unravel each of the Services' current comptroller courses, we began to see numerous inconsistencies.

The goal established by DOD was to develop a two-week introductory course for junior officers and civilian personnel to attend. Keep in mind this new two week course was to replace the eight and ten week courses already in place; courses that currently only discussed the applicable Service topics—not DOD. Each of the Service representatives was skeptical from the start that the current info could be condensed, let alone add new material. After several meetings the DOD representatives announced that several “new” areas of instruction would be added to the already jammed curriculum. The Service reps protested and tried to explain that these new officers and civilian accessions would not know enough about their prospective Service, let alone DOD organizations, and thus would not understand the instruction.

The overriding problem was very apparent to the course developers. We didn’t understand each other, our different missions, or how “finance” folks supported them. We knew very little about most of the Defense organizations and how their missions affected Sgt Snuffy in the field as he computes a travel voucher. But the die was cast that DOD organizations *must* be taught, even if that meant leaving out some of the Service specifics. Instead it was recommended that the focus of the course be changed to just an intro into DOD financial management. This did not sell, since the whole premise (which we didn’t hear about until a month or so later) was to eliminate the present courses from the Services, close the respective schoolhouses, and contract out this new DOD course to a university to operate.

We tried in vain to explain that this would never work. Each Service had uniques to their respective financial management systems that needed to be taught to financial managers. A simple travel voucher computation was different depending on which

Service you were in, and that procedure was one of the few based on current Joint Regulations! Uniform computer systems were not designed (let alone fielded) to make this one process more standardized. Yet the DOD expectation was that this could be taught Joint and in much less time than it was currently taking.

After weeks of debate, the DOD team in charge of this program decided if a Service wanted to retain its current course, funding would be taken out of hide from their O&M budget! So we pressed on, wasting countless hours and TDY expense, designing a course that we all knew would never be presented! After 18 months of development we presented our finished product. The course was given to each Service to review and it was returned bloodied! The Services' financial management (FM) experts were horrified. We had also sent copies of the proposed tests, which each Service had their current FM experts take, and the results were nothing less than tragic—90% failure rates.

The DOD team explained that this was due to the people taking the test not being schooled in the course. The Service FM's were assured the students would do much better. At this point the Service Secretaries for Financial Management weighed in, and convinced DOD to run a pilot course *before* funding to the current schoolhouses was deleted. The pilot was delivered to a class of *current* financial managers, whose ranks ranged from GS-09 and 11 to O-3's and O-4's. This was in direct contrast to the audiences that would actually be taking this new course (typically 2Lt's and entry level GS-5s and GS-7s).

The instructors teaching the pilot were the same ones who developed the course, with some guest instructors from DOD agencies with the required expertise. Some of the classes were literally taught at a graduate level (important to note that most of the GS

employees in the class had limited college experience). The training day was at least eight and sometimes 10 hours long for the students, with instructors being rotated to teach only their area of expertise. It started to become obvious the course could not be completed in the allotted time, so a Saturday session was added. A proposed research project and student briefing were cancelled as well. The test was given and the results were better—only 60% of the students failed! Not bad considering we taught the test to an audience with some experience. The prediction was it would be impossible to have this kind of success (if 60% of the students failing is considered success) with entry-level troops. The course day was also too long and we recommended deleting most of the DOD agency blocks of instruction as well as adding an additional week to the course.

Instead, a second pilot was delivered to a similarly comprised audience with the same results. The program was scrapped shortly there after. But think of the waste! And the “experts” chartered with designing the course predicted exactly what would happen. How could this have been avoided? It probably couldn’t – this project took on a life of its own as soon as some high dollar savings became apparent. But if the senior people better understood the roles and functions of each Service, and if the entry level officers attending the course (for example) had an overall understanding of each of the Service missions, perhaps the course would have been designed and received differently. This is not just an isolated Financial Management story.

In the past the Services were not so “separate.” During WWII and Korea they mixed company and worked together often. However, during Vietnam they kept to themselves.¹ This “separatist attitude could have many causes, budgetary, secrecy brought about by the cold war, the distrust of the military by the American civilians, etc. But with the

interservice mix-ups that seemed to plague the following examples, it is necessary for changes to be implemented to improve Joint Operations.

Desert One—The Iranian Hostage Rescue Attempt

Desert One was the plan developed to rescue our hostages being held by Iran. The US had a system in place for such contingencies, the JCS Crisis Action System. Rather than use this system an “ad hoc” organization was developed, creating an entirely new organization, staff, and procedures to select and train the necessary units.²

Each of the Services began to weigh in with parochialism. The Army wanted this size slice, the Marines need this size slice, etc. The people chosen for the mission, and the Services designated to carry out certain portions, were not always the best for the job. One such example is the helicopter pilots.

As training for the mission began it became apparent that the Navy pilots were chosen to fill the Navy’s “slice” and had no experience low-level flying with night vision goggles.³ Col Kyle (Air Force representative responsible to train the helicopter crews) believed the Air Force had experienced helicopter pilots who could easily adapt and master the skills of flying under blackened out conditions. Instead, the Marines were tasked to select, train, and lead the helicopter force. The helicopter pilots selected were not the “best” experienced for this kind of mission. Rather than using the Air Force pilots who were prepared for long missions, a team with representatives from each Service was put together—most likely to make the team “look” Joint.⁴ The amount of helicopters dedicated to the mission was also woefully small, leaving no room for breakdowns or changes.

Another problem the mission faced was very strict Operational Security. Operational Security was so overemphasized that not one full rehearsal of all the players occurred until they reached the Iranian desert. This lack of integrating training of the entire force proved to be deadly. Each of the Services' practiced their role in the mission separately. Another disconnect was the lack of a single mission commander designated to control this very complex mission. Each service retained control over a portion of the plan. This made an already disjointed plan more confusing when problems arose and decisions needed to be made. Strict radio silence prevented the operators to exchange information when unexpected glitches arose. This further compounded an already choppy information structure.

The force was also ill prepared for the weather. Information on the weather was known in advance, but due to compartmentalization and security reasons, the weather team never talked to the pilots.⁵ The extreme "cyclonic dust storm" greatly degraded visibility and broke up the formations. The lead C-130 could not pass on vital weather information to the helicopters due to the tight radio restrictions. The unexpected weather delayed certain portions of the rescue team and damaged other vital aircraft and systems. Mechanical difficulties caused several helicopters to be lost enroute or to return to the aircraft carrier. Since there was no one overall mission commander on the scene the decision to terminate was not made.

Once the rescue force landed in Iran the Delta Force commander responsible for the ground rescue operation gave the order to abort the mission.⁶ A Sea Stallion helicopter and a EC-130 (loaded with fuel to refuel the helicopters) were both lost as the helicopter collided with the plane. The loss of fuel caused the forces to withdraw without five of the

Sea Stallion helicopters abandoned along with the remains of eight dead US service men, several pieces of mission equipment, and classified documents.

It is always easy to Monday morning quarterback – especially if the team loses. But this mission was doomed from the onset, as soon as more attention was given to a “my fair share mentality.” The absence of a clear cut chain of command with tightly defined responsibilities, coupled with the absence of completely integrated training, meant that the task force never achieved its full potential.⁷ Instead of using each of the Services’ strong points, the plan was developed so that each Service felt it had a vital role. This was not only a case of the right hand not knowing what the left is doing, but also the right hand didn’t know what the left hand *could* do.⁸

Perhaps things would have been different if the planners knew what each Service could bring to the fight. It seems safe to say that we as a military did learn a vital lesson from the Desert One mistakes, and that changes were made to prevent reoccurrence. But is that enough? It stands to reason that if mission leaders have a basic understanding of each Service’s capabilities they will make decisions quickly and easily, when Murphy’s Law takes over. Desert One was a total failure, but other Joint operations had problems as well.

Operation Urgent Fury

Grenada is the next example of a recent Joint operation. Heralded as a great success immediately after the operation was completed, several issues have come to light since that cast a shadow on that overwhelming success story. Yes, the students were rescued and yes, it was an early use of a coalition force of sorts. But what could have been done better?

In congressional testimony given by Adm Wesley L. McDonald, Commander of US Atlantic Command during the operation, he suggested the “shortcomings” in readiness revealed during the operation would not cause problems in a low intensity conflict, but they might in a larger one.⁹ Several well-publicized reports of the Navy and Army communications not being integrated are true. But at least one soldier was killed and others wounded by friendly fire. In one incident a Navy aircraft mistakenly strafed ground forces they were trying to support.¹⁰ Much of the shortcomings experienced with the Grenada operation were technological in nature. Radios that didn’t work between the Services were the most publicized. However another common problem was having Operation plans that called for the Air Force to support the Army, yet the units involved never trained or exercised together.¹¹ But what if all this goes deeper, what if not understanding each other’s roles and missions is the root cause?

This contention not only supports my thesis, but it makes sense. Who in their right mind would purchase radios for each Service that were incompatible? If the acquisition personnel had a basic understanding that the Army infantry would need to communicate with the Navy for support, they would ensure all the systems interoperated. If you were scheduling exercises or developing operational plans, and you knew the AF would need to work closely with the Army in a given situation, you’d ensure the scenario was properly exercised and the troops trained. It just makes sense! We are not lazy or stupid people. If we procure the wrong equipment it’s because we didn’t understand the importance of it in the “big picture.”

Could receiving the very basic background of each Service at an early stage in an officer’s career stop some (if not most) of these interservice problems? Imagine that the

people involved with putting this operation together had received this training. Perhaps one would have said, “have we ever conducted an operation with the Army and practiced this plan?” How many lives and dollars would have been saved!

Grenada had one other flaw that cost some American lives and could have cost the lives of those we were trying to rescue. Intelligence failed.¹² The raw intelligence was collected and analyzed, but not efficiently distributed to the field. The rescue force was unaware of the actual location of the largest concentration of the students. It took 35 hours after the start of the operation to rescue them and an additional concentration of 202 students was not rescued until the fourth day of the operation. Their captors could have slaughtered all of them.¹³ Some of the commando-style pre raids met with disaster as well. Again because the people executing the operation did not understand what the other services could contribute.

ROTC (or any other training) is not to blame for the problems incurred in these operations. But if the personnel executing the plans, and if the personnel designing the plans, understand what the sister Services can bring to the fight, we will have greater success. The last recent operation to review is Desert Shield/Storm.

Operation Desert Shield/Storm

Desert Storm was my generation’s war. It helped the military exorcise ghosts of Vietnam and the country heal from its overall distrust of the military. Luck played a factor in the overall victory—it is very doubtful a similar aggressor will allow us plenty of time to build up our forces in the theater. While Desert Storm was pronounced as a major Joint success, the campaign did have some Joint problems.¹⁴

US CENTCOM typified the increasingly Joint character of US military performance during the crisis and war.¹⁵ The problems that affected military operations of the past, as well as day to day peacetime operations, were those of interservice rivalries. These rivalries were put aside quickly in Desert Storm with the appointment of one CINC (Gen Schwarzkopf) to direct all operations.¹⁶ Rather than having each Service take a portion of the pie, the best Service for the task was chosen.

The Air Force hit targets continually, utilizing air assets of both the Navy and Marines. The Army also contributed its air power. This air assault continued until Iraqi defenses were sufficiently weakened. Instant Thunder was a phased air plan that assaulted Iraq on all levels.¹⁷ The Iraqi air defenses in Iraq, as well as in Kuwait, were hit first. Then the Iraqi ground forces were pounded into submission. But total Joint cooperativeness wasn't always the case.

During the initial planing phases of the ground offensive strategy, the planners failed to include a Marine representative even though the Marines were fully committed to the ground campaign.¹⁸ A British representative was included on the ground offensive team from the onset. This was due in part to the Army having more in common with a NATO ally, than their own sister Service (Marine Corps). Again, it's important to recall the Army had planned for decades on a ground war in Europe. In this planning the allies played a major role. It thus makes complete sense to go with who you know. But if those planners had a basic understanding of what the Marines could bring to a fight, perhaps they would have thought to include them as well.

General Powell, in an interview with Joint Force Quarterly identified improvements necessary in Joint Doctrine.¹⁹ He stated, "Jointness means nothing more than teamwork."

The key has always been to determine the right mix of the Joint force, and to give those units or Services best suited for a tasking, the tasking. Desert Storm was a good example of this teamwork approach. Possibly because each Service *did* get a portion of the pie. Some probably still wanted more, but they each got some and in almost all of the cases the best units were selected based on what they could add to the operation. But could we still improve on Joint operations? Armed Forces ROTC training will improve understanding of each Service. If future leaders have this basic entry level understanding they will be able to not only improve on Joint doctrine, but better implement this doctrine as necessary.

The overall lessons learned from Desert Storm are not new, but tend to be forgotten. People who are well trained and well led win wars. While it is true an effective fighting force must be properly equipped, it is still the people that ultimately win the battle.²⁰ The better our military personnel understand the capabilities of the other services, the better prepared we will be for our next engagement.

Notes

¹ Defense Weekly, 17 Dec 1984, 16.

² Armed Forces Staff College. Iranian Hostage Mission: What Went Wrong, 13 Nov 1984, 10.

³ The 1980 Iran Rescue Mission: Leader's Reflections, 17 May 1991, 13.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ The Iranian Rescue Mission: Why it Failed, (Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1985), 72.

⁶ The 1980 Iran Rescue Mission: Leader's Reflections, 17 May 1991, 19.

⁷ The Iranian Rescue Mission: Why it Failed, (Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1985), 29.

⁸ Desert Victory, (Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1991), 76.

⁹ Army Times, 5 Nov 1984, 5.

¹⁰ Ibid, 5.

¹¹ Defense Weekly, 17 Dec 1984, 16.

¹² Army Times, 5 Nov 1984, 5.

¹³ Ibid.

Notes

- ¹⁴ The Generals' War, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1995), xiv.
- ¹⁵ Desert Victory, (Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1991), 74.
- ¹⁶ Ibid, 75.
- ¹⁷ Ibid, 108.
- ¹⁸ The Generals' War, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1995), 473.
- ¹⁹ Joint Force Quarterly. Emergence of the Joint Officer, Summer 1998, 33.
- ²⁰ Desert Victory, (Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1991), 236.

Chapter 5

Armed Forces ROTC—The Next Generation!

Now is the time to create this Joint ROTC or Armed Forces ROTC curriculum. We are heading into the next millennium and our economy is booming. We also have seen a sharp increase in Joint missions, some long in duration. The Services can not afford to do business as usual; more importantly, we as taxpayers and leaders must ensure this status quo mentality doesn't tie our hands. Back in 1959, Lyons and Masland, in their work, "Education and Military Leadership" documented a similar parochial attitude as exists today among the Services. They warned that ROTC suffered from the separateness of administrative arrangements and the lack of effective coordination between the Services themselves and the military departments and higher education.¹ While the Services will argue that they have changed and have made improvements, this author stands firm in saying not enough.

Roadblocks are the traditional strongholds of the Services when change is suggested. Some of the change addressed by this author will be attacked singly to try and make the whole idea of change sound unattainable. Change and acceptance to new ideas is a part of this "new" generation that is taking control.² If we as leaders worry more about all the possible problems each new idea raises we will never change anything. This author suggests that we should tackle each problem separately, with the true intent on making

this new Armed Force ROTC a reality. If we break through the roadblocks they will crumble and blow away. Some examples of these problems are: What about the 2-year ROTC program? How will the Services ensure an adequate pool of recruits? How will these new units be funded or staffed? These are just the easy problems that are on the surface that the rest of this paper will address.

The 2-year ROTC program may have to be eliminated or greatly modified. If Armed Forces ROTC becomes a reality most of the vital Joint training would occur in the first two years of ROTC training. An ugly fix to this would seem to be making the curriculum for the 2-year cadets Joint for the first six months of their junior year. Then they would choose a Service and continue on with the rest of the cadet corps. This is not a viable option and doesn't address summer encampment, or all the benefits derived from having the cadet corps work together for two years in Joint training. The chances that the benefits of training in a Joint curriculum could be duplicated in summer camp programs are doubtful. While the 2-year ROTC program gives flexibility to recruitment levels, it may be necessary to eliminate it as an option. However, it is conceivable that after an Armed Forces ROTC program is developed and implemented a solution to the 2-year program will be evident.

A key point of this new Armed Forces training is that the cadets will get to choose the Service they wish to serve in after two years of Joint instruction. They will understand the roles and missions of each Service and be able to make an informed choice. Herein lies the next "concern," how will the Services ensure adequate recruitment? The gist of this concern is that all the ROTC cadets will opt to go into the Air Force or Navy vice the Army, thus hurting Army recruitment of officers. This

author's long term answer is that after we do Armed Forces ROTC a similar change should be made to Officer Candidate Schools and they will fill the officer recruitment goals, but let's not open that can of worms just yet! The military answer to this perceived recruitment problem is that not every cadet will get his or her choice. First and foremost it will be based on the needs of the Services. The students will get to identify their preference of the Service they wish to be commissioned into. If a number of cadets want to be Marines, and this fits the overall force structure, let them! If some want to go into the space arena, then the Air Force is probably the best choice. Each ROTC cadet/midshipmen will be ranked based on grade point average, demonstrated leadership abilities in military leadership laboratories, as well as ROTC job preference. This will put more emphasis on the ROTC detachment commander and their staffs. Boards will have to be held and more mentoring and guiding of the projected officers will need to take place – a wonderful side effect.

The next concern over how to operate this new Armed Forces ROTC program is the best one for killing a new project – how will it be funded? The Services are allocated funding by Service and no provisions exist for a Joint ROTC program. The easy solution is to fund this at DOD level, but that is the scariest choice for the Services. It means they will lose some funding they currently receive, as well as the associated loss of control that goes with losing funding. The same is true for overall administration of the detachments and staffing of them by military personnel. The solution is simple—perhaps too simple. Make the new HQ ROTC Joint (it will replace the current HQ ROTC each Service has). It should be a Joint tour, funded like other Joint commands and staffed as such. Each of the ROTC detachment jobs should also count as Joint tour credit—making

it appealing to officers looking for some stability later in their careers, without the associated “kiss of death to a career” stigma ROTC instructor tours sometimes hold. Every Armed Forces detachment will have an officer from each Service present on the teaching staff. The only exception might be with the Marine Corps. Since they have a rather small active duty officer force, only a few campuses will have Marine Corps representation on the ROTC staff. Another benefit to this new Armed Forces ROTC set up is that the services will actually gain new recruiting grounds.

Typically, only one Service is at each location, limiting the area they recruit in. Under this new Joint operation, each Service will be represented at every college or university where ROTC is offered. There will be no additional cost or increase in overhead. Each campus that currently has an ROTC detachment will simply convert to an Armed Forces ROTC detachment. In metropolitan areas, where it makes sense, more cross-town detachments can be set up, effectively saving money by eliminating duplicate detachments. A radius of 60 miles or so could be designated as only one Armed Forces detachment. The students who attended colleges in that area would either commute to the main school offering ROTC or, if the interest is high enough, the instructor staff can travel to the “away” campus.

If all the “concerns (roadblocks) can be shelved for just a minute, let’s determine when the Joint training should occur and when the cadets should be split into Service unique training. Actually that is a misnomer—*never* should the cadets be taught in only a specific Service. In every year of their ROTC experience they should have at least one course with a joint flavor. This will keep overall awareness of future Joint operations and reduce tendencies to only worry about their specific Service.

Joint subjects would be covered the first two years of the cadets' training. Marching, leadership, UCMJ, military history, etc. would all be taught and the cadets would wear BDU's—a Joint type of uniform. Separate Service classes would also be taught to the cadets, so they could determine which Service they wished to serve in. The cadets would then choose which one they wished to be commissioned into after sophomore year. The Services' specific summer encampment would be held that summer, orientating the cadets into their chosen Services' mission uniques. The summer encampments should be Service specific, and the cadets would continue to get Service specific training upon returning to the detachment for the remaining two years. Prior to summer camp Service uniform combinations would be issued and this could be an event similar to "Assignment Night" at pilot training bases. The ceremony would emphasize each Service's role in a Joint Force.

Notes

¹ Education and Military Leadership: A Study of the ROTC, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1959), 153.

² The Art of the Long View, (New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, 1991), 214.

Chapter 6

Conclusions

Change for any institution is not easy. In order to unlock fresh ideas and perspectives for the future we need to sometimes forget the status quo.¹ The Army last revised their ROTC program in 1991, as a result of the Cold War draw down.² The Air Force and Navy have gone through much less extensive revisions, mostly to curriculum. But the Army's was a complete overhaul of what they realized to be an antiquated system. A similar overhaul is needed for ROTC in general.

When are we going to stop getting lucky? Grenada, Desert Storm, both had a lot of luck involved. Could better training reduce this reliance on luck and make the mission a success because we were properly trained for it? Lack of unity of effort has been the cause of recent failures in Joint operation. The Joint Doctrine being created now is a direct result of these failures, wouldn't it help even more if the future leaders, planners and operators of these missions had a broad understanding of each Service's capabilities?

Competition between the Services is vital to ensuring we get the most from each. Simply terming a mission Joint or forcing Jointness into an operation is a terrible way to curb this competition. A better answer and more lasting fix to this competition is to have all the players involved properly versed in the abilities of each Service. A Joint ROTC program starts this endeavor.

Gen Powell gave an accurate definition of Jointness. He said, “Jointness is understanding broadly what your fellow soldiers, sailors, airman, and marines bring to the battle and trusting them to do it right and well, and their feeling the same about you.”³ Joint ROTC will achieve this goal. Every member will gain and increased appreciation of what his cohorts can do – and through experience – will know they will do it right!

Just like the Nike commercial, it’s time to “just do it!”

Notes

¹ The Art of the Long View, (New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, 1991), 9.

² U.S. Army Cadet Command: The Ten Year History, (Virginia: U.S. Army Cadet Command, 1996), 254.

³ Joint Force Quarterly. Emergence of the Joint Officer, Summer 1998, 66.

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